

Message Text

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72-S

ACTION DLOS-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 FEA-01 ACDA-05 AGR-05 AID-05

CEA-01 CEQ-01 CG-00 CIAE-00 CIEP-01 OFA-01 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 EB-07 EPA-01 ERDA-05 FMC-01 H-02

INR-07 INT-05 IO-10 JUSE-00 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

NSF-01 OES-03 OMB-01 PA-01 PM-03 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /116 W

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO USMISSION GENEVA

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 8924

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 10894

FOR MOORE FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLOS

SUBJECT: FRENCH ATTITUDES TOWARDS LOS NEGOTIATIONS

REF: GENEVA 2836

1. WE HAVE NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT FRENCH
HESITATIONS ON LOS CONVENTION ARE BASED ON
ANYTHING OTHER THAN REASON YOU HAVE NOTED; THAT IS, GOF
FEELING THAT EVOLVING LOS CONSENSUS IS NOT FAVORABLE TO-
-PERHAPS EVEN CONTRARY TO--FRENCH INTERESTS, PARTI-
CULARLY IN THE ECONOMIC ZONE. FOR SOME TIME, FRENCH
OFFICIALS HAVE APPROACHED LOS NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT
GREAT ENTHUSIASM (PARIS 25251 OF 10/74);
APPARENTLY DAMAGE-LIMITATION IS THEIR MAJOR CURRENT
NEGOTIATING GOAL.

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2. LOS POLICY IS NOT PARTICULARLY CONTENTIOUS ISSUE

WITHIN GOF. MAJOR DOMESTIC POLITICAL PRESSURE ON GOVERNMENT IS FROM FISHING INDUSTRY, WHICH BELIEVES ECONOMIC ZONE REGIME EMERGING FROM GENEVA NEGOTIATIONS WILL ENDANGER ITS ACCESS TO IMPORTANT DISTANT FISHERIES. AS FRANCE HAS NO IMPORTANT COASTAL SHELF RESOURCES TO PROTECT IN RETURN FOR ACCEPTING ECONOMIC ZONE RESTRICTIONS BY OTHERS, GOF OFFICIALS HAVE AT TIMES GIVEN IMPRESSION THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE UNHAPPY OVER FAILURE OF EFFORT TO NEGOTIATE COMPREHENSIVE LOS CONVENTION, SO AS TO BE FREE TO PURSUE FRENCH ECONOMIC ADVANTAGE BILATERALLY OR ON REGIONAL BASIS WITH CHOSEN RESOURCE-RICH COASTAL STATES. ON TRANSIT AND NAVIGATION ISSUES WHICH ALSO IMPORTANT TO GOF, FRENCH APPEAR TO FEEL THEY CAN LIVE WITHOUT CONVENTION AS LONG AS MAJOR MARITIME POWERS REMAIN UNITED TO PROTECT THEIR INTERESTS.

3. WE ARE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT GOF CAN BE CONVERTED TO POSITIVE VIRTUES OF CONVENTION. WHILE CHIEF NEGOTIATORS MAY REMAIN PREPARED TO MAKE EFFORT, WE DOUBT IF THEIR INSTRUCTIONS GIVE THEM MUCH ROOM FOR IMAGINATIVE COMPROMISE, OR SPIRITED RESISTANCE TO GROUP OF 77 DEMANDS. GOF'S ESSENTIALLY PESSIMISTIC ANALYSIS SEEMS TO BE SLIPPING TOWARD CONCLUSION THAT FRENCH INTERESTS CAN BE AS WELL PROTECTED WITHOUT COMPREHENSIVE LOS CONVENTION AS UNDER ONE WHICH THEY FIND UNSATISFACTORY. IN THIS CONTEXT, BELIEVE OUR BEST APPROACH WOULD BE TO ACCENTUATE THE NEGATIVE--THAT IS, THE HARMFUL EFFECT WHICH FAILURE OF LOS CONFERENCE COULD HOLD FOR FRENCH INTERESTS.
RUSH

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